BALLET TODAY

VOL 2. No. 21 FEBRUARY 1950

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

I hope all my readers will approve the monthly appearance of *Ballet Today* and its new price, and will think that this more than compensates for the by no means proportionate reduction in size. The recent unconditional release of newsprint has finally made this possible, and from the many letters I have received I am certain that the new policy is a popular one. I should like to take this opportunity of thanking all those kind people who, when renewing their subscriptions, took the additional trouble of writing some heartening words of appreciation. Editors do not expect a constant shower of bouquets, but a bloom from time to time does help them on their thorny way.

Although Sadler's Wells Ballet is headline news since its American and Canadian triumphs, the fact that with the New Year the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, passed from private ownership to ownership by the State rated only small paragraphs in one or two of the daily papers. The general public is not likely to be aware of any differences unless at any time there should be a change in the present form of administration (which remains as before); all the same, let us keep it in mind in future that the Royal Opera House *is* from now on England's first State Theatre.

It seems almost certain that Sadler's Wells will return to America and Canada this autumn, in which case a longer tour including a number of additional cities will be arranged. Mr. S. Hurok will have no difficulty this time in fixing dates beforehand. Several theatre managers were extremely doubtful about the English Ballet having any box office "pull", and Detroit gave a flat refusal. The good citizens of Detroit must have been considerably enraged to find that the manager of the local theatre had turned down, on their behalf, the biggest theatrical attraction in years. As it was announced some time ago that Sadler's Wells was expected to appear at La Scala, Milan, this autumn, it looks as though this arrangement has been cancelled in favour of the dollar-bringing American tour.

Unless plans go awry in the interim, Ballet Theatre will be coming to England late this spring, probably to the Prince's Theatre which is rapidly becoming the recognised home of visiting ballet companies. It is already quite definite that Teresa and Luisillo (with their own company of Spanish dancers and musicians) will be appearing at the Prince's Theatre late in March after a preliminary four to six weeks' tour of the English provinces. Londoners who remember them with Carmen Amaya's company last year will need no further word from me, but provincial audiences are urged not to miss what will certainly be a most exhilarating experience.

Now that Mr. S. Hurok has safely negotiated a three-weeks' season for Sadler's Wells Ballet at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, in September, there can be no harm in revealing that at one juncture this looked extremely shaky, for Rudolf Bing, late of Glyndebourne and the Edinburgh Festivals and now director of the Metropolitan Opera House, is extremely anxious to introduce a new ruling that in future no visiting companies be invited to appear. However, for this year anyway, Sadler's Wells is securely fixed. P.W.M.

TERESA AND LUISILLO WHO ARE NOW TOURING THE PROVINCES AND WILL APPEAR AT THE PRINCE'S THEATRE, LONDON, IN MARCH

Photograph by Duncan Melvin

THE RETURN OF SADLER'S WELLS

By MARY CLARKE

WHAT can one say about the early part of the Sadler's Wells season that opened at Covent Garden on December 26th? For several weeks we saw nothing but *Cinderella* and *The Sleeping Beauty* and although these ballets do not cease to be remarkable in their individual ways, there comes a time when one wearies of writing (and of reading) that Miss X was delightful as Cinderella or Mr. Y was somewhat unsatisfactory as the Blue Bird. For a New Year novelty, therefore, I intend to write about the dancers hardly at all but to discuss instead the performance put on by the audience, for I still have not succeeded in understanding what happened on the first night.

For weeks we had heard of nothing but the unprecedented demand for seats ; the fantastic over-night queues ; and even of the enterprising young lady who got herself a job in the Gallery Box Office in order to take care of her friends' requirements (a plot which was, however, exposed and torpedoed at the outset). Everyone anticipated a tumultuous reception, something quite out of the ordinary and something to cap the North American triumphs. It seemed such an obvious opportunity for mass congratulation and for displaying London's pride in the company that it supports for so many months of the year.

The audience, individually, expected this and, more important, the dancers did too. They were looking forward to it not so much in a spirit of complacency as of almost home-town affection. They *wanted* London to applaud louder and longer than New York.

And what happened ? The audience wandered in apathetically, managed a smatter of applause for the conductor, let the curtain rise in dead silence and greeted every episode of the first act of *Cinderella* with no more than polite handclaps. New York did better with the dreary prologue to *The Sleeping Beauty*. Things cheered up a little as the ballet progressed and by the end of the evening the big reception did come. Unfortunately by then it was too late. The dancers had had an utterly miserable evening and the audience by no means deserved as good a performance as it got.

Why was it all such a let-down ? Of course it was Boxing Night, which is usually marked by a certain degree of torpor in the audience for seasonal reasons, and the ballet was *Cinderella*, which is beguiling throughout rather than occasionally spectacular and built for bursts of applause as is *The Sleeping Beauty*. Perhaps self-consciousness in the face of a rather emotional occasion kept the audience hand-tied, as it were, but I suspect that the main reason was simply an exaggeration of the normal English audience reaction.

We are the best ballet audience in the world, we think. We are the most discriminating, and the most loyal and we have the longest memories in theatrical history. By and large, these comforting beliefs may be justified but it seems to me that we do not possess the one quality which distinguishes an American audience. We lack ebullience. We understand, we appreciate but we do not make our reaction felt in the warm, vital way that the Americans do *during the course of a performance*. It is not only a matter of applauding stunts or

BERYL GREY AS AURORA IN "THE SLEEPING BEAUTY". TO THE GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT OF HER HOST OF ADMIRERS, ILLNESS PREVENTED MISS GREY'S APPEARANCE IN THIS PART AFTER SEVERAL PERFORMANCES HAD BEEN ANNOUNCED

Photograph by Helga Sharland

Photograph by Walter E. Owen, New York

VIOLETTA ELVIN AS THE BLUE BIRD IN "THE SLEEPING BEAUTY"

feats of virtuosity ; that can be exhilarating in an unashamedly bravura passage but can equally be irritating and damaging when applied indiscriminately. Americans do not applaud *only* the brilliant and the clever (much as they love these qualities) ; they react audibly to things that move and delight them in a simpler way. If a dancer pleases merely by the way she walks on to a stage they will welcome her, as they welcomed Beryl Grey when she walked on, an unknown Lilac Fairy, at the New York opening. "Oh, they applaud anything", sneers the Englishman. Yes, in a way they do, but they make some distinction in the manner of their applause despite their generosity.

Applause and appreciation, we all know, lighten and brighten a performance. Overdone it is as reprehensible as any excess but underdone it is as bad. Imagine the effect upon a visiting company of the deathly hush that greets some ballets in England ! After it has been carefully explained to the visitors that the English never applaud during the course of "ballets of mood", they understand and usually quite approve, but the initial shock can be quite paralysing. At the end of a ballet the English can be as appreciative as any audience in the world but this is not of much help to the dancer during the performance. It is like dancing before a silent gathering of judges rather than what is, fundamentally, the other half of the two human factors which constitute any theatrical performance.

Sadler's Wells, of course, understand their home audience and do not look for applause in what London calls "the wrong places". Nevertheless most of the dancers maintain that they give their best performances, as a company, abroad. In New York I saw for myself that this is true and I have heard it confirmed frequently about performances on the Continent. The reasons are obviously those of excitement, challenge and the stimulus of new reactions and new responses. In London this stimulus is missing—vitiated by long seasons, a small repertoire and an audience that consists of a very high proportion of people who go night after night after night. The dancers get bored with the audience (knowing where every laugh will come at every performance) and bored with the repertoire. The audience, in turn, gets bored with the company and only on special occasions (which draw a special audience in a specially responsive mood) is this stimulus provided. Stimulus is largely a matter of audience reaction and if it is possible to give the dancers such a fillip it will be to everyone's advantage. I believe that much of the lusty vitality of the American stage is attributable to it, but I also believe that the audiences there are able to react to ballet as they do because they do not see it for seasons of six months at a time.

This has all been presented very much from the dancer's point of view but where audiences affect performances (and except in a few cases of complete dedication on the part of the artist they always do) I think it is a matter which should be voiced. It may appear that I have used the New York audience simply as a rod with which to beat the English one ; this was not intentional except with respect to the one quality which I specified. Over long periods of time the English audience is possibly preferable, but it cannot be denied that New York managed a Sadler's Wells opening night much better than did London. Indeed if the company allowed Mr. Hurok to sign them up for fifty-two weeks this year we could hardly complain.

School of Russian Ballet

The faculty and students of this new school in Chelsea gave two evenings of music and dance on January 24th and 25th. During the interval at the second performance M. Vladimir Launitz, famous ballet conductor and an intimate friend of the late Nicholas Legat, gave a delightful impromptu talk about the great teacher on whose system the classical training at this school is founded.

SADLER'S WELLS IN AMERICA AND CANADA

By FRANKLIN WHITE

THE golden curtains of the Metropolitan Opera House rose and fell for the last call, the applause died away and the New York season was over. Telegrams and other tokens of good wishes, that had framed the dressing room mirrors throughout that memorable month were taken down and packed away with the make-up. Final farewells before going down to the stage for that perilous journey across to the stage door, with back-cloths, rostrum and flats descending and being moved in all directions. One more glance at the orders for the next day's journey and away for the last few hours in that ever active city.

In the cold grey light of the following morning Broadway seemed sordid and more noisy than ever. There was an atmosphere in which one felt that things were quite likely to go wrong, a feeling that soon prov to be only too correct. The Manhattan traffic at th hour is dense and the buses that were taking us to t station were soon deep in a hopeless struggle to gain few feet. We sat dozing and clinging on to all t parcels that the month's shopping had made impossib to pack in the limited amount of luggage allowed for a travel. Once again just a few yards before another jo to a standstill and more waiting. At last the statio but with only a few minutes to go. No time to wait f the luggage, that would have to follow us later, straig into the train and away on the start of a tour unlike an other that we had done before. What effect wou getting off the train shortly before giving a performanc have on our dancing ? What difficulties would or and two night stands produce ?

That evening we opened in Washington with performance which President Truman attended. Fo some time now it has not been possible to use the or and only theatre there, so our three performances wer given on the platform of the Constitution Hall. Ther were no facilities for any scenery, all ballets had to b presented with only costumes, props and limite lighting effects. The only division from the audienc was a low hand-drawn curtain, around which man people could see into the back stage sections of the sma platform. Enough has been said already of the con sequences of its slippery surface. It seems a pity tha Sadler's Wells could not have been seen in the America capital in a more complete form, but perhaps th difficulties that now stand in the way of having a theatr there will eventually be overcome. In spite of th there were few cities that I was more sorry to leav especially as it meant getting up at 5 a.m., after reception at the British Embassy, followed by privat parties, which had taken up most of the night.

Of Richmond I saw little, within half an hour arriving there several of us were off to Williamsburg some fifty miles away. This is the original colonia capital of Virginia which has been reconstructed by on of the Rockefeller family. I saw equally little of tha evening's performance given in Richmond and an earl train call next morning prevented any further explor tions of that city. Apart from Williamsburg my mai memories of the South are of the fabulous meals consisting of all the things that one occasionally dream of in England, eaten on the train whilst travelling pa

FRANKLIN WHITE, A LEADING CHARACTER DANCER OF SADLER'S WELLS BALLET

Photograph by Basil Shackleton

the weather-boarded whitewashed buildings and brilliant "fall" colours, amid the many inlets of that part of the east coast.

For the two days' stop in Philadelphia we arrived only two hours before the scheduled time of the first performance. Consequently there was no time for even a class to acclimatise ourselves to this, once more, ice-like stage. How do companies that continuously do long tours at this speed keep up a reasonable standard of work? The lack of rest and time for practice makes a great difference that one felt, even after only five days, in which time we had visited three cities.

After the last performance in Philadelphia we left immediately for the journey consisting of some thousand odd miles inland from the Atlantic coast to Chicago, which gave most people in the company their first experience of American sleeping cars, with their rows of double decked curtained bunks and negro attendants. Later in the tour these were to be our only living quarters for a short time. A curious condition in our A.G.M.A. contracts, the union to which we belonged while over there, stipulated that all members must have a lower berth, or receive monetary compensation. I was lucky never to be in a position to receive this minor bonus, having instead the privilege of a window, alongside of which I could lie in comfort and enjoy looking out on a clear night. I was vaguely conscious of heavy shunting at Pittsburgh, but only at a much later hour the next day did I discover that we were not on the Chicago Express as expected, but on a freight train, due in that city many hours later than the planned time. The Chicago authorities had arranged a deputation of Highland pipers and dancers to greet us, followed by a triumphant march along some of the main streets. From autumn colours and temperatures in the 80s to leaflessness and bitter winds sweeping in off the lake. From express to freight train, on which we made our somewhat ignominious "entrée", six hours late. The kilted children were still there, but the pipers had gone. In the drizzling rain we waited for the drivers around the firmly closed doors of the two buses provided for us, on the sides of which large posters proclaimed Chicago's welcome to Sadler's Wells. A police escort, with the usual red lights and wailing sirens, took us around the intended route of the frustrated march. A faint reminder of the famous ride to the Mayor's party on the first night in New York.

Chicago's Civic Opera House is situated in a modest skyscraper of some fortyeight floors. During the day it is not possible to have lighting rehearsals, as all the available electricity supplied to the block is required for the Television Theatre and offices above. This meant all night work for the already tired staff, after the last week's rapid touring. In spite of this, here was a well equipped theatre with, among many other good facilities, comfortable dressing rooms, something so rare in any theatre in most countries.

The repertoire was now somewhat cut down. The great distance to be covered and lack of stage space, plus the bulk and size of their scenery, made it impractical to travel *Cinderella*, *Job* and *Apparitions* after New York. Constant Lambert also returned to London at that time; this meant the deletion of *A Wedding Bouquet* for which Constant Lambert narrated the Gertrude Stein words. An American artist, Robert Zeller, accompanied us on the rest of the tour as guest conductor. *The Sleeping Beauty* remained with us for the moment and opened the Chicago season. Once more success was immediate. Press reports and criticisms were, on the whole, about the same in attitude as those of New York, with the variances in personal taste. Enthusiasm was more than apparent, as nightly the almost continuous applause and cheers grew. Perhaps the climax was at the end of the third act variations and coda in *Le Lac des Cygnes*. Never have I heard such a sound, as the whole of the audience seemed to break out with a unanimous yell of appreciation. It was a most successful week, with the

THE FAMOUS RUSSIAN TEA ROOM, RENDEZVOUS OF BALLET DANCERS, WELCOMED SADLER'S WELLS WITH A SPECIAL WINDOW DISPLAY, AS DID MANY NEW YORK SHOPS

Photograph by Walter E. Owen

demand for seats, here as everywhere we had visited and were to go to, far exceeding the number available. After the last performance in Chicago the last deletions took place, in preparation for the consistently small stages from then on. Eight members of the company and *The Sleeping Beauty* returned to London. Miss de Valois also, accompanied us no further on the tour.

At East Lansing our performances were given as part of the year's Lecture Concert programme of the Michigan State College, where we performed in the college auditorium. On the first night we gave *The Rake's Progress*, *Façade* and *Hamlet* followed next evening by the whole of *Le Lac des Cygnes*. Stagecraft is included in the college curriculum, consequently many of the theatre staff were students. The large auditorium could easily have been filled several times over from the unlucky applicants for our last two performances in America, which the college press proclaimed to be the year's finest programme. The following evening we crossed the American-Canadian border at Port Huron.

On November the 24th we gave our first Canadian performance at the Royal Alexandra Theatre in Toronto. Outside a heavy snowstorm made visibility difficult ; for different reasons the light on the stage was equally dim. The theatre had only a moderate amount of lighting fixtures, including a complete lack of dimming equipment. What lights there were could only be switched full on or off. Luckily we carry a portable switchboard and dimming banks, but not enough equipment to compensate completely and allow a great range of lighting effects. The Canadian critics, like the Americans, not only fully appreciated the work of individual dancers, but as a Toronto critic said after an evening consisting of *Checkmate*, *Symphonic Variations* and *Miracle in the Gorbals*,—"In all three ballets it was the company itself which starred, starred by virtue of its harmony, balance and cohesion of talent. The British ballet has raised itself to the great eminence it holds today by virtue of this unity and co-operation".

Coca-Cola was presented to us throughout the week by its makers and an amusing scene went on nightly back stage when romantic Swans and Princes, Shakespearian characters and ruffians from the Gorbals, imbibed this "strong" liquid, while waiting to go on. The contrast between Coca-Cola and the characters of many periods that were drinking it from the bottles was sometimes grotesque.

During a reception given at the City Hall, we first met representatives of the "rival attraction"—the Calgary Stampeders. They had invaded Toronto in full force for the yearly football game, with Cowboy riding habits, ten-gallon hats and Indians. Their parade and celebrations minimise even our Cup Final in hilarity ; they even rode their horses through some hotel lobbies after the match. The following day the Mayor arranged for us to be taken to Niagara Falls, and so escaped any further activities of the Stampede Members of the Volkoff School of Ballet accompan us.

During the journey from Toronto to Ottawa a from there to Montreal we had our only taste of worki from the train. The efforts of various members of t press ringing the "front door bells" of our wheel hotel, woke me at the start of a full day. Apart fro any private arrangements made, there was a reception Government House, at which we met Lord and La Alexander. The performance was given in a theat converted back for the day from a cinema, and aft wards yet another reception. At about 4.30 a.m. wi the party spirit in full swing and continuing various wash rooms, the train moved on to Montre There was to be a performance there that night. that one performance in the capital over eight thousa people had to be refused tickets. Returned chequ and money orders amounted to over 30,000 dolla It was here also that the cartoon appeared depicting hold-up with the caption "Never mind the money—gi me those Sadler's Wells ballet tickets".

On the first night in Montreal an event occurred th might easily have turned into a serious panic. The was a fire scare in the middle of the second act of *Le L des Cygnes*. I heard several versions of the cause. believe this to be the nearest to fact. Apparently waste paper basket had caught alight in the foyer, a while being put out the smoke began to drift into t theatre, a murmur arose and people began to quick leave. Whether it was the quick action on the part several members of the audience in ordering the rest them to sit down and keep quiet, or the effect of t swans, who strictly ignored the whole situation, or bot I have no idea. At all events the noise ceased and t swans received a great ovation at the end of their danc their seeming lack of interest at the disturbance in t auditorium being appreciated.

By now the rate of life and working was beginning be felt among us. A rest at home with time to ha regular class and a full night's sleep were needed. T excitement of the tour was being superseded by t equally enjoyable idea of going home. At last came t time to pack those bulging cases, many pounds over t maximum air weight. We were already to go, the the weather broke. Up until then there had been clear, sharp atmosphere varying between 2 and degrees, too cold for snow. Over night the temper ture went up, and down came rain and haze ; wor still in New York a blizzard grounded our 'planes. W sat about all day while the departure time was put off f a few hours, time after time. It was late afterno before the final blow came, one 'plane carrying t majority of the company would leave that night, t remaining nineteen boys would not leave until next da

t was too late to make any arrangements to see friends, nor in that deflated mood, felt by most of us, was that dea particularly agreeable. Several of us went reluc- antly to the cinema and saw a bad film, afterwards we ate oysters, "T.bone" steaks and banana splits that did not nterest us, and placed nickels in juke boxes for tunes hat we did not really want to hear. The excitement which had lasted for eleven perfect weeks without a break of any kind had crashed. An anticlimax existed to its full extent. There was not even the pleasant knowledge of definitely leaving the next day. The tour was over.

Ballet Rambert

Ballet Rambert are at present on a six weeks' tour of Germany under the auspices of the British Council. They have taken with them eleven representative English ballets including *Simple Symphony*, *Lilac Garden*, *Gala Performance*, *The Fugitive*, *Bar aux Folies-Bergère* and *Façade*.

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JUNE BRAE AND BERYL GREY PHOTOGRAPHED IN CENTRAL PARK

Photograph by Walter E. Owen

DANCE NOTATION AND CHOROSCRIPT

A NEW PROFESSION

By PAUL TASSOVIN

WHAT would a dancer in this country do, if on joining a ballet company, the *régisseur* handed him a few pages of dancescript, saying: "There are your parts. Go and learn them".? And if, furthermore, he was expected to return later to rehearse step-perfect? He would be a little bewildered, to say the least. But is it really so much to expect of an artist? That he be able to read and decipher his art? That he be literate?

Is it not reasonable that the student dancer like the student actor or musician, should acquire his learning in part from what has been written? The pianist learns his notes from the manuscript his forefathers have set down; the teacher observes, and guides. Is there any conclusive reason why the dancer should not learn his steps in the same way? There was just this reason, that because of the difficulties of time and space, and the multiple nature of the human body, there existed no adequate way of writing down movement.

Today that reason does not hold good, and it becomes imperative that the choreographer be able to record his works in print, in the same way as the dramatist and the composer.

For years dancers and choreographers have fought shy of notation. Its complexities appeared tedious and boring, and none really believed in the validity of it. A ponderous pastime for a few cranks and moderns to indulge in, but such doubtful extravagances were not practicable for the theatre. Why bother? Ballet had existed for hundreds of years and been handed down by word and gesture come how it may; there was nothing tied down, no certain boundaries, dancers had always learned their art like parrots, and it was a lovely world for charlatans to thrive in. Why change it?

Let us admit that dancers and choreographers are lazy people, not physically perhaps, but most often mentally lethargic. The fact is they have never had to bother. Nobody ever knew anything about ballet, except perhaps for a few specialists, and even the specialists didn't know the whole story because it had never been written down. Consequently it has always been the easiest thing in the world to bamboozle the ignorant ballet-going public, and easy enough to bamboozle one another. In reviving a classic, nobody knew who was right or wrong. Nobody knew for sure. Some remembered better than others. Those who couldn't remember at all just invented, and were frequently just as well off.

Of such uncertain stuff is the fabric of our ball that prospers now on the crested wave propelled wi perilous momentum by fakers and racketeers to feed ravenous multitude that devours without discriminatio Well, some will cynically say: What need to recor There is so little of any value to preserve. Let t junk pass into obscurity.

Such a view-point is all very well for cynics, but these conditions how is the art ever to progress to t status of other arts? Only by means of a revolution, throwing overboard out-of-date methods and prejudice and by accepting notation. With the coming of dan literacy the whole integrity of ballet would strengthened and fortified. Counterfeit productio would be at once recognisable, and the protecti laws of copyright could be enforced. The revolutio I advocate might well bring about the end of dilettantis in ballet, and herald a new era of development a achievement.

Several systems of notation have appeared during t last hundred years. None of them caused much of stir, or created any real enthusiasm except that Rudolf von Laban which was invented some thirty o years ago. Here in England Sigurd Leeder is probab the only authority on the Laban notation. Mr. Leed has done considerable work in the revision and in proving of Laban's system, and actively directed t scripting of the Jooss classics, *The Green Table* a *Big City*. Apart from teaching the subject in his Scho of Dance, Leeder finds that there is no field open f the practical uses of notation at the present time, b he foresees that it will have to be adopted before ball can reach any state of permanent stability.

Another system, as yet unpublished, exists in Englan That of Nijinsky. The great Russian dancer devise his system in 1918 and used it for recording *L'Apr midi d'un faune* and *Petrouchka* for which purposes was found to be completely successful. During h long illness Nijinsky's system has remained forgott and unused. At the present time Madame Nicolaev Legat is engaged in translating and revising the syste which she hopes to bring out in due course.

The really tremendous news about notation howeve comes from New York, where the work of recordi ballets and whole repertoires has been started in considerable way, and in numerous dance schools a colleges dancers and teachers are learning to re dance script and record with it.

Ann Hutchinson who studied notation with Jooss a

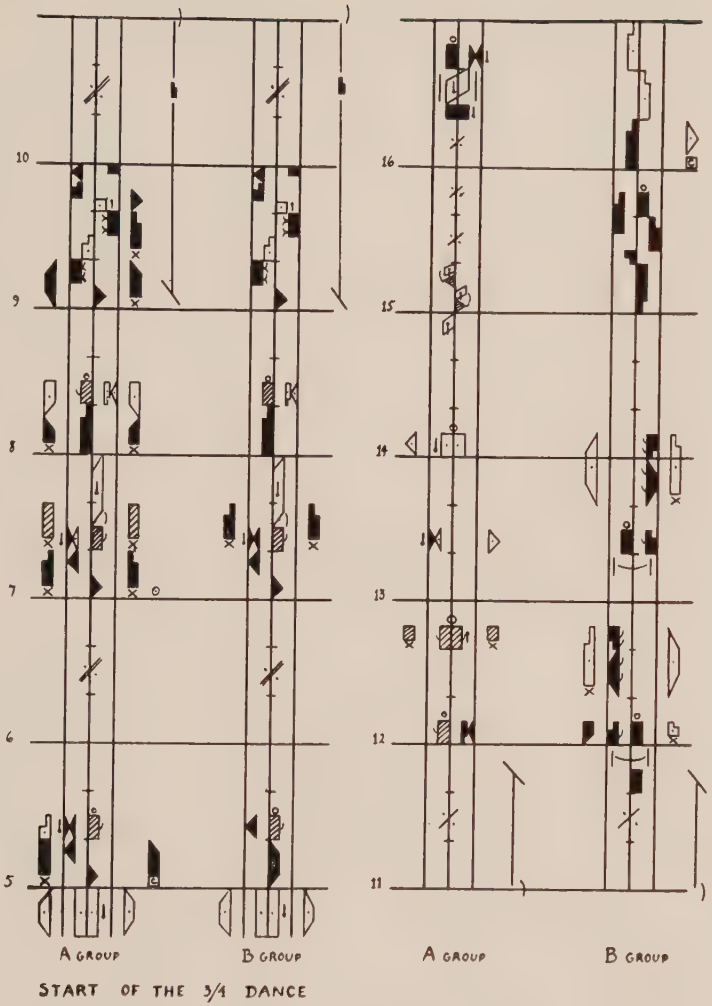


FIG. 1. FRAGMENT OF GROUP MOVEMENT FROM JEROME ROBBINS' "THE GUESTS." SCRIPTED BY ANN HUTCHINSON. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF THE DANCE NOTATION BUREAU OF NEW YORK

eeder at Dartington Hall, has accomplished a vital ork in America by fostering an interest in notation, nd the culmination of her efforts would appear to be ie founding of a Dance Notation Bureau that is meeting ith remarkable success. George Balanchine was the rst of the top-line choreographers to be won over the cause. All his ballets in the repertoire of the ew York City Ballet are being recorded by the ureau. Jerome Robbins was the next to follow. hough sceptical at first, he soon became keen. Most horeographers approach with suspicion and distrust, ut after a few demonstrations, Miss Hutchinson finds iat they take quickly to the project, and are often ost anxious to record all their works.

Accepting this stimulating news as a fact accomplished, would it not be wise to look a little with unprejudiced eyes into the workings of notation ?

The Dance Notation Bureau of New York states that the Laban system is not complicated, rather it is movement that is complex, and movement becomes easier with familiarity. The Laban system can be explained and understood in an hour or two, and a working knowledge acquired with ten or fifteen lessons. With a further fifteen or twenty lessons it can be mastered completely. Like shorthand or languages, speed and proficiency come with practice. It has been found that children can learn it very quickly.

A ballet can be written down in dance script in the

time that it takes to rehearse, and can be reproduced from the script in much less time. The score of a ballet takes little more paper than a full orchestral score. Whereas the musical stave is read horizontally, the dance stave is read vertically from down-up.

Simply, the Laban system works thus : The medium of dance is movement in time and space. Space consists of three dimensions in which movement can travel, viz. forward-backward, side to side, and up-down. The up-down direction is denoted by the shading of symbols an open square for horizontal, a shaded square for high and a black square for low. Movements in the other two dimensions are denoted by the shape of the symbols. These symbols which cover precisely the movements of legs, body, and arms, are written on a stave, or series of staves, representing each character and *corps de ballet*, and they run parallel beneath the musical staves.

In addition to the basic symbols which amount to twenty-seven, there are a number of special signs and devices for indicating unusual gestures and *nuances*, but in practice it has been found that the system is apt to be too full, and in the main elimination is necessary.

Laban's system is not limited to modern or central European movement. It can be used for classical, and neo-classic (it has been used to record movements of workers in factories) as may be seen from the fragments of dance script in figures 1 and 2.

Not much is known about Nijinsky's system, but Madame Legat informs me that it is based on two circles one vertical, the other horizontal. It is linear like music, and there are three clefs comprising three staves in each, which are used for specific parts of the body. Music notes are used to denote the movement, and sharps and flats are employed to indicate degrees of movement. A number of incidentals are used as well. Madame Legat believes that Nijinsky's notation is practical and efficient, and not more complex than any other system that has been invented. She plans to embody the study of it in her school curriculum.

In addition to the Laban and Nijinsky systems there exists another system which is gaining popularity in America. Alwin Nikolais who studied with Laban has brought out a method which he calls "Choroscript" (see chart Fig. 3). Though based, or shall I say derived, from Laban's system, it shows some interesting develop-

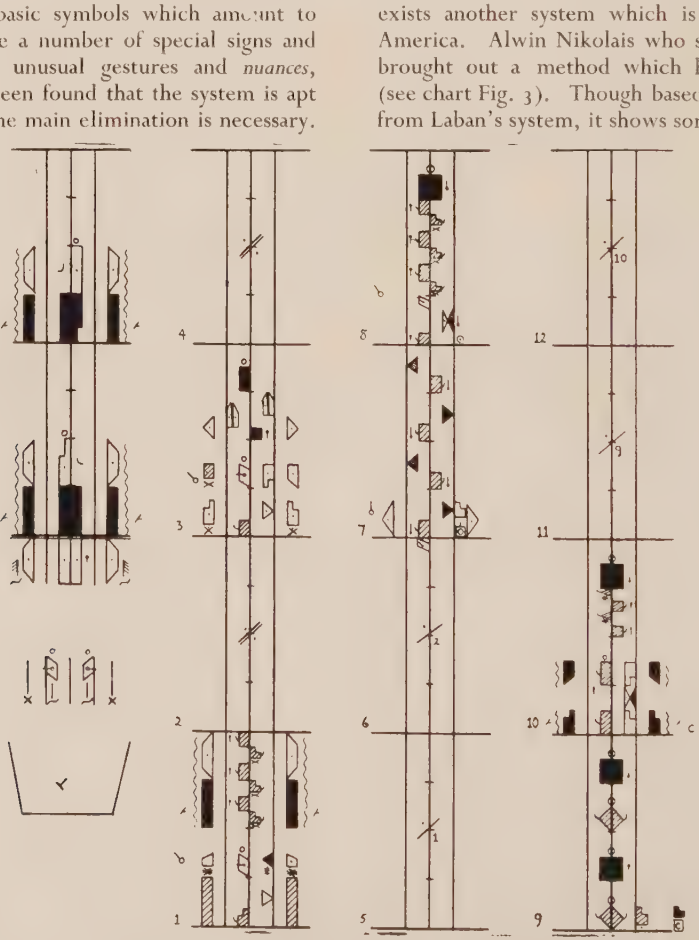
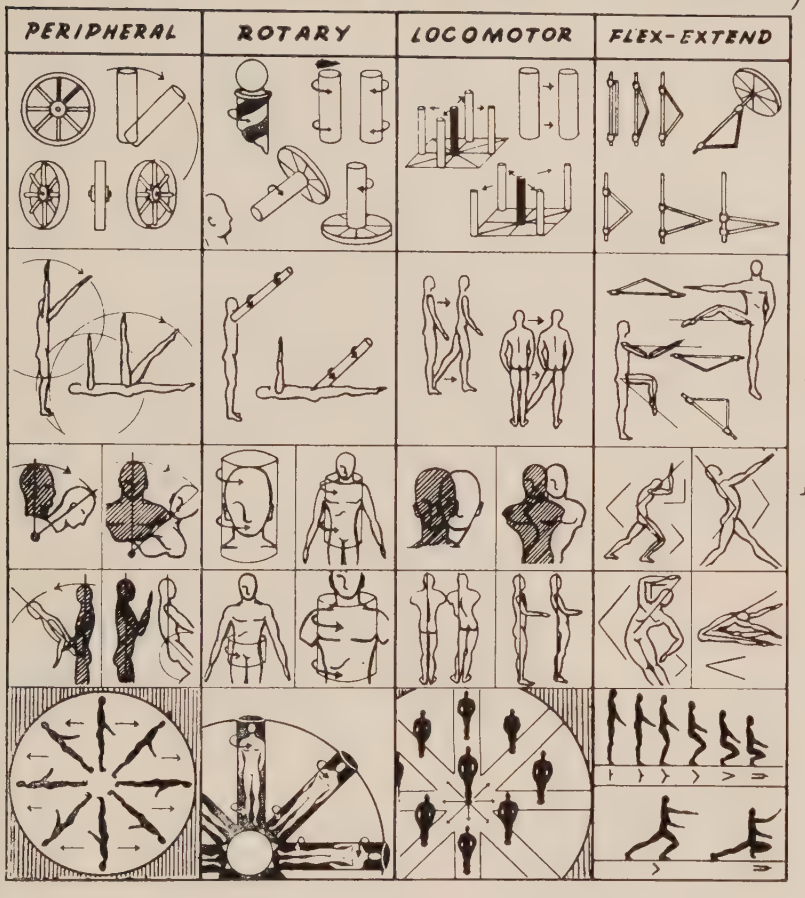
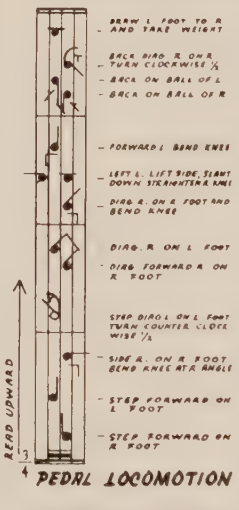
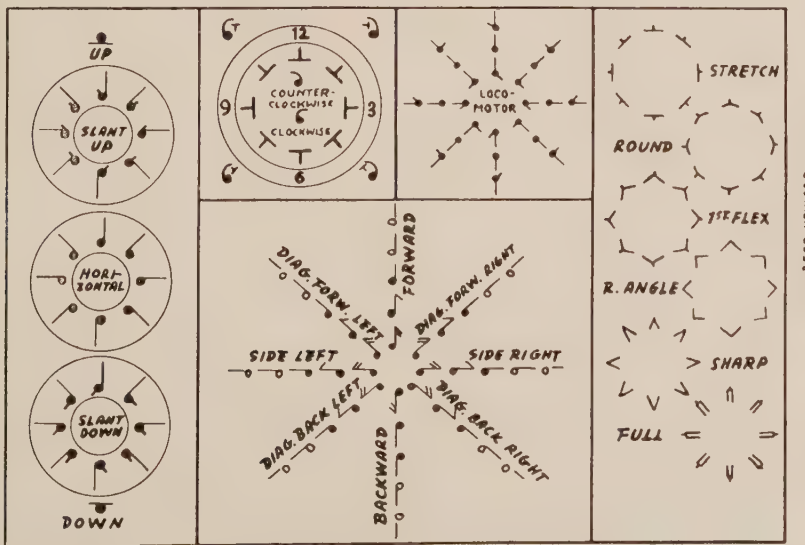


FIG. 2. FRAGMENT OF THE FEMALE VARIATION OF "THE BLUE BIRD." SCRIPTED BY ANN HUTCHINSON. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF THE DANCE NOTATION BUREAU OF NEW YORK

CHOROSCRIPT · MOVEMENT ANALYSIS AND NOTATION by ALWIN NIKOLAIS







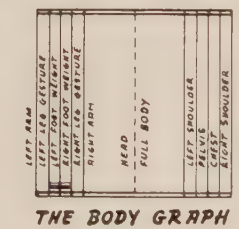


FIG. 3. ANALYSIS CHART OF ALWYN NIKOLAIS' CHOROSCRIPT

ments. Instead of using the Laban symbols, Nikolais has reverted to the music note for its definition of time, using the stem as directional indicator. He has also divided the body graph into two staves, so that in the writing Choroscript can be neatly tied note by note and bar by bar to the musical score. Floor patterns are, of course, carried at the side.

Nikolais' analysis of movement is divided into three structural categories: Peripheral, in which "the body member attached at one end by its joint extends out from that centre like the radius of an imaginary sphere, the outward end describing the circumference". Rotary, rotation of body or body unit in its own sphere, and Locomotor, moving from one position to another.

He uses four groups of imaginary rays to tabulate the basic spacial stations of axial movement. From the compass point of eight horizontal rays are added two vertical rays, upward, and downwards. Midway between each horizontal ray and the vertical ray are added eight upward slanting rays, and eight downward slanting rays. In all twenty-six rays are used by means of which the exact direction of every movement may be indicated.

Nikolais claims that his analysis of Flexion-extension (see chart) and its writing is a considerable development. The "accidental symbol covers several factors at once, including direction, degree of rotation, and flexion" and "the same theoretical basis and graphic symbols are utilised in such a way that without complication or loss of detail a great short cut is possible."

In this short article which is intended more as a general survey of notation activities than a study of its workings, it has not been my purpose to give a complete and comprehensive picture of the Laban and Nikolais' systems (each system in itself would take more than one article to describe and analyse fully). I have, however, tried to give a few clues as to the way notation works in the hope that it may arouse interest, and perhaps even provoke some action from those who guide the course of ballet in this country.

To my mind the importance of recent developments cannot be overemphasised, nor can they be ignored. In his article entitled "A New Method of Dance Notation" appearing in *Theatre Arts*, February 1948, Alwin Nikolais has said :

"Movement notation is still in its infancy. Its vast potentialities have only just begun to be explored. It is difficult to estimate what such a record can do for dance as an art. At the very least it can preserve the products of artistic creation for the enjoyment of future generations. And by clarifying the logical processes of composition it may help to assist the dance to a permanent position as a distinguished member of the family of fine arts."

We may see, then, that a considerable industry is under way in the United States, in fact a new profession has been born—the dance scribe. I think it hardly an exaggeration to say that the possibility of almost complete dance literacy in a generation or two is within the bounds of possibility, for at the rate things are moving it will not be long before every young dancer who graduates from dance school will be equipped with the ability to read a dance script from sight.

There lies the path of progress, the promise of reformation, and a challenge that English ballet cannot afford to dismiss.

THE SEASON AT SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE

SELDOM has the "show must go on" tradition been more strikingly exemplified than by the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet who, after losing almost an entire repertoire in the disastrous fire at Hanley last June, continued their tour without cancelling a single date and, by the end of the year had replaced every ballet. It was perhaps a pity that the terms of the insurance necessitated that the money be expended solely for replacements when it could have been more usefully employed by partial expenditure on new works, but all the same it is a theatrical achievement which deserves recording.

While the parent company was abroad, the junior team consolidated its position with an evening as well as a Saturday matinée appearance each week. It has now reverted to Saturdays only (which are invariably packed out), except for the production of new works which are charmingly accorded the dignity of an evening première.

By the time this article appears there will have been a new Spanish ballet by Angelo Andes (first night, January 31st); and a first ballet by Michael Somes, titled *Summer Interlude* and set to music by Respighi with a décor by Sophie Fedorovitch, is scheduled for March

DAVID BLAIR, ONE OF THE MOST PROMISING MALE DANCERS ENGLISH BALLET HAS YET PRODUCED

28th, but at this date both the new works of the season have been by John Cranko. Each ballet has its faults, but taken together and in conjunction with his earlier *Children's Corner* they combine to give one real hope of a choreographic talent to be reckoned with.

Since his return from America, Cranko has considerably overhauled *Sea Change*, removing altogether the figure of the pastor who did not have any satisfactory reason for existing, finding a greater range of movement for the groups and abolishing the use of point shoes which were quite out of context. One salutes a mind which is prepared to face its shortcomings in this way, but he has not been able to remove the rock on which this ballet unhappily founders—the fact that the music has a life of its own which continually swamps the story Cranko has tried to fit to it. Rhythmically he is never at fault, for his musical ear is acute, but he is not yet a match for the mature Sibelius and Cranko's fisher folk simply do not exist in the same climate.

The fault cannot by any means be altogether laid at Cranko's door. It is becoming more and more evident that the use of existing music is reaching a dead end, yet it remains almost impossible for a young choreographer (or an experienced one for that matter) to be afforded the opportunity of working in collaboration with a composer. We are all well aware of the difficulties attendant on commissioning an original score and many composers have no idea of what is involved, but we also know that such collaborations gave the world *Petrouchka*, *The Fire Bird*, *Le Tricorne* and *Horoscope*, to say nothing of the Tchaikovsky masterpieces.

Music is again the weakness in Cranko's second ballet, *Beauty and the Beast*. He has arranged this to Ravel's *Mother Goose* which is a suite, where what is needed is a continuous musical narrative. The long *pas de deux* form is a most difficult one to handle unless one is blessed with a Karsavina and Nijinsky to create for or has Cocteau to assist with its theatrical presentation. Lacking these essentials, Cranko still manages to hold the attention most of the time and uses a far wider choreographic vocabulary than he has hitherto compassed—his own comparative inexperience as a dancer is a present handicap—and he brings off his big moment most movingly. The transformation of the Beast is wonderfully well contrived. It is because he shows

PIRMIN TRECU AND SHEILAH O'REILLY IN THE SPANISH DANCE FROM "CASSE NOISETTE"

Photograph by Felix Fonteyn

both here and in *Sea Change* that he can rise to an occasion that one awaits from him the important work of which one catches fleeting glimpses in all he has done up to now.

It was expecting too much of poor William Chappell that he should provide a *fifth* décor for *Les Rendezvous*. Perhaps the present one is his protest, for surely the eye can rarely have been so affronted as it is by this set and these costumes. Fortunately the company continue to dance it so well that a great deal of pleasure remains.

On the other hand *La Fête Etrange* has never looked more beautiful than it does now. The company in general are still too inexperienced for such a work of intangible moods and this is emphasised by the wonderfully sensitive performance of Leo Kersley who, though young in years has a wealth of stage experience behind him and, out of that experience, can project emotions which are beyond the scope of someone actually much nearer the age of the character portrayed.

I am afraid that the presentation of *Swan Lake*, Act 2, reveals the shortcomings rather than the many virtues of this young company. To be almost able to dance Odette with technical correctness matters hardly at all in comparison with the inability to express any of the Swan Queen's tragedy. For once, also, David Poole completely misconceives a character, and his Siegfried, though deft enough as a partner, is like nothing so much as a cheery boy scout training for his woodcraft badge.

Against this lapse must be placed his terrifying boxer in *Mardi Gras*. Amazing makeup apart, Poole manages to give the effect of a tremendous physique—a remarkable example of the way in which an artist may, by sheer will power and personality *impose* an impression on his audience.

Casse Noisette struggles against some very unfortunate tempi, but surely one may be honest about this ballet and state boldly that, except for the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier (*not* the Nutcracker Prince, please) the choreography is almost all very poor. Angelo Andes has re-worked the Spanish dance, but in trying to fit authentic Spanish steps into a classical framework he has for once failed to be exciting. However, this revival is made eminently worth-while by revealing the seventeen-year-old David Blair as a *danseur noble* of extraordinary promise in technique, style, stage presence and partnering.

So many young dancers fail to develop that one hardly dares to make prophecies, but in Blair and Pirmin Trecu (a dancer of equally outstanding talent though very different in type) it does look as if English Ballet has produced two male dancers who in a very few years will stand comparison with the best anywhere. Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet have several promising girls, but these two boys (partly because of the rarity of male talent in this country) are the present focus of attention.

It is a great pity that the audience which goes to Sadler's Wells is so completely undiscriminating. Whether there now exist in London two entirely different sets of ballet goers, those who attend Covent Garden and those who find the difficulties of getting in are too much for them so "make do" with Sadler's Wells, I do not pretend to know, but the fact remains that these still very immature boys and girls are greeted with storms of cheers no matter what they do. If both audiences could be well shaken up together and re-distributed between the two theatres, it would do all the good in the world to both.

P.W.M.

The Roger Wood photograph on the cover is of "Selina" at Sadler's Wells Theatre. The group includes Elaine Fifield, Stella Claire, David Poole and Pirmin Trecu.

PATRICIA MILLER AND DAVID POOLE IN "BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Photograph by Felix Fonteyn

THE

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Edited by ARNOLD L. HASKELL

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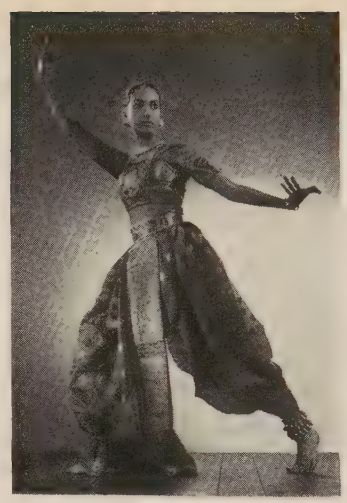

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NEWS FROM NEW YORK

By MURRAY N. FRIEDMAN

THE first half of the season of the New York City Ballet recently completed has been in many respects its most successful to date, and in some respects its most unsatisfactory. Opening on November 23rd at the City Center, it extended over a period of three weeks and featured four ballets new to the repertoire as well as a re-working of several standbys.

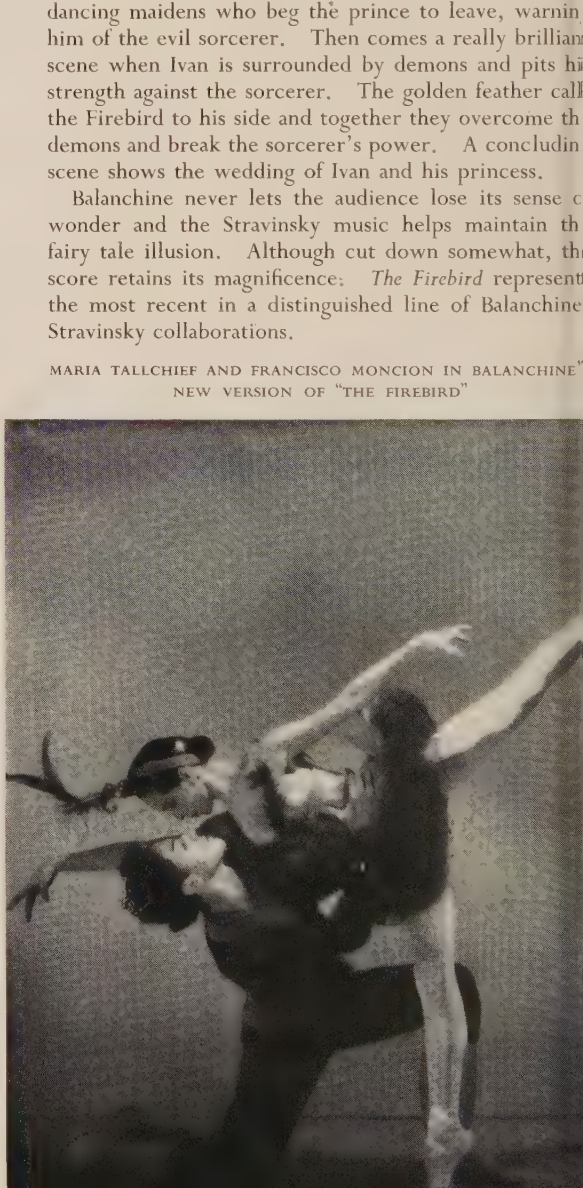
It was a considerable challenge to this inexperienced company to have to open so soon after the departure of Sadler's Wells. The inevitable comparisons were made to the disadvantage of the American company. A dozen ballets, four of them new, had to be rehearsed in three or four weeks with a company that had lost many of its soloists and for which the largest part of the *corps de ballet* had been recruited from the classes of the School of American Ballet. The company was rehearsing during the last days of the Sadler's Wells season. It would be interesting to know what passed through the mind of George Balanchine, the artistic director, when he would watch the Wells in the evening after a long day of trying to whip his charges into some presentable shape. It is a mark of his energy and patience that the results were so good. As a matter of fact, they got better as the season progressed, for rehearsals were scheduled every matinée-free day. At least two ballets which were sloppy (to say the least) in the opening performances, took on some meaning by the time the last days had rolled around.

By far the biggest hit of the season, from a popular as well as a critical standpoint, was Balanchine's creation of *The Firebird*. The last version seen in New York of this famous ballet was Adolph Bolm's, set for Alicia Markova and Anton Dolin. At that time the decor by Marc Chagall dominated the weak choreography. Through the courtesy of Mr. S. Hurok the same magnificent Chagall sets were made available, and though they proved too large for the small City Center stage, this time the choreography was impressive enough to subdue them. This is not to say that I have no reservations about the current version of *The Firebird*: I have several. It was uneven in several places and I felt that on occasion a "circusy" showiness had been substituted for brilliance (brilliantine rather than brilliance). But taking it by and large Mr. Balanchine has made an exciting fairy tale, and Maria Tallchief and Francisco Monican scored justifiable personal triumphs.

The story is the familiar one about Prince Ivan who, while hunting, wanders into the enchanted forest and captures the Firebird. When he releases her, she gives him a golden feather. There follows a scene with dancing maidens who beg the prince to leave, warning him of the evil sorcerer. Then comes a really brilliant scene when Ivan is surrounded by demons and pits his strength against the sorcerer. The golden feather calls the Firebird to his side and together they overcome the demons and break the sorcerer's power. A concluding scene shows the wedding of Ivan and his princess.

Balanchine never lets the audience lose its sense of wonder and the Stravinsky music helps maintain the fairy tale illusion. Although cut down somewhat, the score retains its magnificence. *The Firebird* represents the most recent in a distinguished line of Balanchine-Stravinsky collaborations.

MARIA TALLCHIEF AND FRANCISCO MONCION IN BALANCHINE'S NEW VERSION OF "THE FIREBIRD"



Photograph by Melton Pippin

GEORGE BALANCHINE

The second new ballet by Mr. Balanchine to be introduced this season was *Bourrée Fantasque* to music by Emmanuel Chabrier. This is a charming and witty opus, but perhaps a wee bit too long. The jest has a tendency to lose some of its flavour when it has been over-extended. There is no scenario ; the three movements of the ballet being marked Bourrée Fantasque, Prelude and Fête Polonaise. Tanaquil Le Clerq and Jerome Robbins were delightful and saucy in the first movement, Maria Tallchief and Nicholas Magallanes added the right note of contrast in the second movement, and Janet Reed and Herbert Bliss led the group to a romping conclusion in the final movement. Edwina Fontaine and Yvonne Mounsey were outstandingly good in supporting roles in the Prelude. Miss Mounsey particularly is a dancer of great strength and sensitivity. I predict a rising future for her in the company as roles suited to her talents are made available. She comes to the New York City Ballet with a wealth of experience as head of her own company in South Africa.

Lew Christenson's *Jinx*, to music by Benjamin Britten, is not a new ballet in the strict sense, but it was new to most of the audience. It was done originally for Dance Players in 1942 but has been re-worked and improved to a considerable extent. This is a ballet that grows on one. At first view it may not reveal all its good points but the latter become increasingly evident at further performances. It is a simple tale of a small circus troupe where Jinx, the clown, is blamed for the series of accidents that occur. He seems to be a "jinx", always present when someone is injured or suffers other mishap. The entire troupe chases him until finally the ringmaster kills him, but Jinx returns to plague them. Francisco Moncion, who is really coming into his own this season, was very good as Jinx and the little specialty numbers were well cast : Janet Reed, Ruth Sobotka and Frank Hobi as the Wirewalkers, Herbert Bliss, Barbara Milberg and Barbara Walczak as the Equestrians, Georgie Hiden as the Strong Lady, Dorothy Dushoch as the Tattooed Lady and Beatrice Tompkins as the Bearded Lady, and Val Buttignol as the Ringmaster. Miss Tompkins, particularly, has a fine comic gift. She is one of the most delightful *demi-caractère* dancers now appearing in New York.

The final new ballet of the season, which received only one performance, was William Dollar's *Ondine*. The company needed a romantic ballet and this is a ballet in the romantic tradition. It tells in five scenes of a young fisherman, Matteo, who, while fishing for his supper, nets the naiad, Ondine. When she tries to lure him under water with her, he resists because he is already in love with Giannina, a peasant maid. Ondine, however, transports him in a dream to the sub-marine world where she lives under the rule of Hydrola, Queen of Waters. At the Festival of the Madonna, Ondine entices Giannina into the water and substitutes herself for the peasant girl. Matteo is not deceived ; Hydrola carries Ondine under the water and restores Giannina to her fisherman.

If this seems a trifle confusing, that is the way it unfolded on the stage. Some of the audience were a little baffled. Apart from the intricacies of plot there are many lovely things in this ballet, especially a delightful peasant dance, and I hope that succeeding revisions, rehearsals and performances will tighten up the ballet so that it can show to better advantage. Tanaquil Le Clerq was Ondine, while Francisco Moncion was Matteo. Melissa Hayden, formerly of Ballet Theatre and a welcome addition to the company, danced Giannina and Yvonne Mounsey was Hydrola.

The first performance of *Serenade*, one of the greatest of all Balanchine's works, was so thoroughly untidy that it had to be seen to be believed. It was the low point of the season. By the last week, however, it had been picked up to a point where it was presentable, though far from memorable. Jerome Robbins' *Guests*, on the other hand, was well done and looks better now than it did last season. *Orpheus* still stands as an outstanding work, and there were other ballets to keep it company: *Divertimenti*, *Concerto Barocco*, *Symphonie Concertante*,

TANAQUIL LE CLERQ AN
FRANCISCO MONCION I
BALANCHINE'S "SYMPHON
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Symphony in C, *Four Temperaments*, while Tod Bolender's *Mother Goose Suite* completed the offerings.

The New York City Ballet will be back soon for the second half of its season. There will be a six-weeks' rehearsal period before the opening, but several new ballets are planned. There are, if everything materialises, to be one or two new ballets by Balanchine, one by Jerome Robbins and one by Frederick Ashton. We shall see whether that is too ambitious a programme.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Ashton ballet is *Les Illuminations* to the choral work by Benjamin Britten based on the poems of Rimbaud. Frederick Ashton sailed for New York on January 25th and will fly back immediately after the first night which is on March 6th. *Les Illuminations* will have a décor by Cecil Beaton. During this February 21st to March 19th season of the New York City Ballet Balanchine will revive his *Prodigal Son* which was the last major work of the Diaghilev Ballet in 1929 and gave Lifar his greatest triumph. Only the Lichine version has been seen in England since that time. His new ballet is called *Jones Beach*.

"Arabesque"

The Oxford University Ballet Club are reviving their successful wartime publication *Arabesque*, as a quarterly, price half-a-crown. The first number will be ready this month.

International Ballet

International Ballet have just returned from a seaso in Zurich—the first time any company of this size ha ever appeared in Switzerland or presented a full-lengt classical ballet. Extensive provincial tours are arrange for this year, including many visits to cinemas in town which have not previously seen ballet at all. Severa junior members of the company are now being groome for more important roles, and Maurice Béjart, seen las year at the Prince's Theatre, London, has joined th company as *premier danseur*.

Royal Command Performance

The King and Queen accompanied by the Frenc President, Monsieur Auriol, and Madame Auriol, wi attend a special performance of Ballet at the Roya Opera House on March 9th. The programme wi consist of *Symphonic Variations*, *Façade*, and the last ac of *The Sleeping Beauty* into which the fairy variation from the Prologue will be inserted for the occasion

hotograph by Rimis

ONA INGLESBY, DIRECTOR AND BALLERINA OF THE INTER-ATIONAL BALLET, AS AURORA IN "THE SLEEPING PRINCESS"

Photograph by Angus McBean

CLAUDIE ALGERANOVA LEADING DANCER WITH THE INTER-NATIONAL BALLET, AS CHIARINA IN "CARNAVAL"

POST-WAR CHOREOGRAPHY

ATTEMPTS AT ASSESSMENT

By JANET SINCLAIR

THE four post-war years have presented to the English audience the fruits of what must surely be a eriod of activity unprecedented in ballet history. he Sadler's Wells Ballet at Covent Garden have given s five new works by Ashton (and the same choreo-rapher has presented a sixth new ballet in Rosebery venue) ; Helpmann's *Adam Zero*, and Massine's *lam'zelle Angot* and *Clock Symphony*. The junior ompany, in addition to Ashton's composition, has iven us works by Celia Franca, John Cranko, Andrée loward and others : the two visiting French companies ave presented repertoires almost entirely new to ondon, with ballets by Petit and Charrat predomina-ng. Ballet Theatre has shown us the American horeographic world of Jerome Robbins, Michael Kidd nd Agnes de Mille, together with Tudor's psycho-ogical experiments and Fokine's swan song : Lichine as been represented in the repertoire of more than one company and the Metropolitan Ballet has presented two new ballets by Staff.

So much in four years inevitably causes a certain amount of mental indigestion, and it might be worth while to assess the possible permanent value of some of those young choreographers who have come into prominence since the end of the war.

Roland Petit follows in the footsteps of his master Lifar as the *enfant terrible* of the late 'forties. Possessed of magnificent theatrical sense, his dramatic gift is apt to run away with him and he is now more than ever in need of someone, perhaps a strong-minded impresario, to control his more extravagant flights of fancy. Three of his ballets have startled the English ballet world to a degree unparalleled since the great "symphonic" controversy began to rage fifteen years ago, and with *Les Forains*, *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort* and *Carmen* his work has left an ineffaceable mark on the ballet world of this

decade. However, he does not progress : his work with the *corps de ballet* shows lack of invention and movement, and he seems to delight in throwing obstacles in his own path in the shape of sets cluttered with a higher proportion of props, cigarettes, chairs, tables, washbasins and beds than those of any other choreographer. Primarily a dramatic rather than a plastic creator, if he can combine his grip of dramatic situation with the ravishing invention shown in his *pas de deux*, and in his *pas de deux* alone, he may yet prove himself a great choreographer.

Petit's bland and shameless indifference to the value of music's contribution to ballet—another inheritance from Lifar—is thrown into strong relief by the works of the other choreographers to be considered. The first, Celia Franca, must be judged on two ballets composed for Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet : *Khadra* and *Bailemos*. Trained as a pianist, her extraordinary sense of music compensates in her work for the lack of that dramatic gift which makes Petit's ballets remarkable. Her balletic phrases run in unshakable parallel with the phrases of her score ; she masses her dancers in blocks and evolving patterns which broadly affect the eye in solid affinity to the aural impressions arising from the orchestra. Her steps are never finicky, for her understanding of the potentialities of the human frame is too complete to allow her to produce the niggling fiddly *terre à terre* steps which are so often the downfall of the female choreographer—her movements rise upon the music, they alternately carry, and are carried. Her realisation of the score is primarily a rhythmic and literal one and the more strong and colourful the orchestral accompaniment, the more successful and exhilarating her choreography : she is not at her best at moments of lyrical tenderness, perhaps because her approach to ballet appears to be mainly a cerebral one.

John Cranko, the great "find" of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, is the diametrical opposite to Franca in that he is all heart : his great moments come not from the sweep of passionate movement but from the tender, touching revelation of intimate and often childlike emotions. If he is using a score that is sympathetic to him, as with *Children's Corner*, he seems able to insinuate his mind into the delicate structure of the music and capture the very spirit and essence of the composer's intention. A very young man, he is capable of the immense blunders of youth ; but they are never blunders of taste. The value of Franca's work lies mainly in the stage pattern of the choreography : this is of little moment in Cranko's ballets, and thus one can say that his work loses little or nothing if seen from stalls level, whereas the removal of the third dimension does immeasurable harm to Franca's ballets. Cranko can make a use as telling, in his quiet way, of the little idiosyncratic movement—(the monkey runs its little paw down the Golliwog's arm until the forefinger slips tentatively into the latter's gentle grasp)—as can Massine, often on a larger scale, such as the despairing leaps and sobs of the deserted Barber. Another parallel between these two choreographers, who on the surface appear so unlike, is their grasp of the reactions of childhood—watching the gambols of the Skipper's Child in *Sea Change* can give one the same kind of insight into the mind of a child as one received from watching the dances of the baby Riabouchinska in *Jeux d'Enfants*.

Cranko's work can show the appealing tenderness of the best of Disney : when he tackles a strong tragedy like *Sea Change* he is lost, and the overwhelming effect of this work when seen for the first time must be credited to the well-calculated "sob-story" and the brilliant production and lighting. How far the artistic failure of this work—and a failure it is, though a noble one—is due to the imposed score is a debatable point ; the ballet is valuable in marking a stage in his development, and for finally revealing Sheilah O'Reilly as one of the three most dynamic female personalities as yet discovered by Sadler's Wells. However, it must remain as a composition as over-ambitious as Olivier's film of *Hamlet*, and if Cranko himself can analyse the exact reasons for its failure this should prove of vital importance in the career of what at the moment appears to be the white hope of Sadler's Wells.

Beauty and the Beast, on the other hand, is a return to the fantastic style which suits him so well, and it is a little poem of inventive movement which has revealed Patricia Miller as a sleeping beauty—ill served by the classical work in which she has so often been cast—waiting for an opportunity such as this to reveal herself at her best in a true and lyrical interpretation of real poetry. This ballet is more derivative than Cranko's previous works and one can see the influence of Ashton, Balanchine and even Petit, but it is a delight to watch : and if the Beast is pathetic and neither tragic nor heroic, such a deficiency is implicit in Cranko's individual gifts and does not affect the ballet's success.

It is almost impossible to analyse the value of a choreographer from one ballet : but Jean Babilee's *L'Amour et son Amour* left a remarkable impression upon the mind of one observer, at least. This ballet moved and dreamed through a lyrical score with a musical sensibility so far lacking in the work of other French choreographers and with an absolute lack of derivation from any other choreographer's work. When it was over, one was left with no desire to applaud (a rare occurrence in the ballet theatre of today where extravagant applause is the seal of success), no desire to do anything but relax and think about what one had witnessed. The London ballet world awaits his next ballet with intense curiosity. That a dancer of such vital physical strength should have produced a ballet of such dream-like, slow-motion quality is remarkable

n itself : when such a ballet is a first ballet—one hardly lares to mention or to discuss it, fearing that the sequel cannot be anything but a bitter disappointment.

It is by the choreographer, and one is tempted to say by the choreographer alone, that ballets, ballet companies and balletic ideas and ideals live and die : the choreographer is remembered as the keystone of the past. It will be interesting in twenty-five years' time to look back at these notes and see which of these four young choreographers will leave his or her own ineradicable mark on the latter half of the twentieth century, or if they are all forgotten and new gods and idols have arisen.

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